Grammy-nominated composer Chris Brubeck continues to distinguish himself as a multifaceted performer and creative force. Respected music critic John von Rhein of the *Chicago Tribune* called him “a composer with a real flair for lyrical melody—a 21st-century Lenny Bernstein.” Brubeck has created an impressive body of symphonic work while maintaining a demanding touring and recording schedule with his two groups: the Brubeck Brothers Quartet (with brother Dan on drums), and Triple Play, an acoustic trio featuring Chris on piano, bass guitar, and trombone along with guitarist Joel Brown and harmonica player extraordinaire Peter Madcat Ruth.

In 2018 the Brubeck Brothers Quartet released their *Timeline* CD in time for their tour celebrating the 60th anniversary of Dave Brubeck’s historic State Department tour. The Quartet has also scheduled numerous engagements in 2020 honoring the 100th anniversary of Dave Brubeck’s birth.

A much sought-after composer, Brubeck had his double concerto *Pas de deux* premiered by Jaime Laredo and Sharon Robinson in 2018 at the Classical Tahoe Festival, and in 2017 the famed Canadian Brass premiered his *No Borders* with the Lexington Philharmonic. Brubeck’s commissions have resulted in other innovative works for a variety of artists and ensembles—among them guitarist Sharon Isbin, mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade, violinist Nick Kendall, Time for Three, the Muir String Quartet, the Concord Chamber Music Society, the Boston Pops, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and the Colorado Music Festival as well as the National, Baltimore, Indianapolis, Portland, Stockton, and Oakland East Bay Symphonies.

Brubeck is also a renowned trombone soloist, who recorded his highly acclaimed Bass Trombone Concerto with the London Symphony Orchestra. The work appears on the album *Bach to Brubeck* and has been performed by many of the world’s top bass trombonists. His second trombone concerto, *The Prague Concerto*, which he premiered and recorded with the Czech National Symphony Orchestra, appears on his album *Convergence*, about which *Fanfare* magazine raved, “Brubeck’s skill both as composer and soloist is extraordinary.”

Another career highlight was the 2009 premiere of *Ansel Adams: America*, an exciting orchestral piece co-written by Chris and Dave Brubeck to accompany one hundred of Adams’s
majestic images projected above the orchestra. Commissioned by a consortium of eight orchestras—led by the Stockton Symphony—the work received a Grammy nomination in 2013 for Best Instrumental Composition.

Note by the composer

People always ask me, “What was it like to grow up in Dave Brubeck’s house?” Beyond the usual madcap chaos of five siblings, there was often the wonderful sound of melodies bouncing off the walls from my father’s piano or from the other legendary musicians he played with for years. I used to crawl under my Dad’s grand piano to listen to them rehearse (and stay out of the way). I heard the playful musical explorations of melodic phrases and exotic rhythms that would ultimately evolve into many of the tunes recorded on Time Out. This album by the Dave Brubeck Quartet is still considered a masterpiece and regarded as a historically impactful LP—it became one of the best-selling jazz recordings of all time. I have enjoyed more than half a century of hearing these tunes and performing them alongside my father, my brothers, and other accomplished musicians. As we enter the 60th anniversary of the release of Time Out and also celebrate the juncture of my dad’s 100th birthday (if he were still with us), I felt his centennial year was the right time to create a symphonic arrangement reflecting and celebrating my father’s creativity that orchestras could play all across the world.

What made the landmark LP Time Out so singularly popular were the original, innovative tunes and the odd time signatures performed by truly incredible musicians—Blue Rondo à la Turk in 9/8, Take Five in 5/4, and Three To Get Ready and Four to Go, which alternated bars of 3/4 and 4/4. Kathy’s Waltz (inspired by my five-year-old sister twirling through our living room in her tutu) features a marvelously lyrical melody and charming chord progression that is exceeded only by the beautiful ballad Strange Meadowlark.

Dave Brubeck’s compositions lend themselves to orchestral interpretation, and in my imagination Everybody’s Jumping was just “begging” to show off the triple-tonguing chops of the brass section. I wanted to salute my father, my “jazz uncles” Paul Desmond, Joe Morello, and Eugene Wright, my remarkable mother Iola (without whose amazing intelligence, insights,
devotion, and faith in my dad’s talent no one would know who he was today), and my musical brothers, who have performed such lasting and exciting music with our dad all over the world.

I also grew up hearing my father’s orchestral explorations, which began with Leonard Bernstein; both pioneers dared to integrate the jazz and classical art forms. These concerts and recordings were regarded as revolutionary endeavors in the early ’60s. Their groundbreaking experiments provided inroads into collaborations with jazz artists and orchestras throughout the world.

Over many years my father and I have enjoyed a terrific friendship with Maestro Peter Jaffe, who helped and encouraged me throughout this gratifying process of creating *The Time Out Suite* to celebrate my father’s enduring compositions. I’m certain that my dad (the young cowboy from northern California who transformed into a musician at the University of the Pacific) would have been overjoyed to hear the Stockton Symphony introduce this latest version of his music in this brand-new orchestral suite.

—Chris Brubeck

*Scored for 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, tambourine, vibraphone, suspended cymbal, glockenspiel, celesta, xylophone, snare drum, clay drum (or hi bongo or hi-tuned roto tom), triangle, cymbals, hand clapping, bass drum, drum set, piano, and strings*

**Violin Concerto in D minor, op. 47**
Jean Sibelius
*Born in Hämeenlinna (Tavastehus), December 8, 1865; died in Järvenpää, September 20, 1957*

Sibelius, himself a violinist, had dreams as a youth of being a virtuoso, but the idea of writing a violin concerto may have been planted in his mind by violinist Willy Burmester in the spring of 1902. He wrote Sibelius the following year to inquire whether the concerto was finished and offered himself as soloist. Burmester was to have received the dedication and first performance, but Sibelius behaved badly by approaching Viktor Nováček, a mediocre violinist, to play a premiere at a time before Burmester was available. Burmester was naturally upset, but Sibelius was determined to go forward, despite the fact that he hadn’t yet completed the Concerto.

The new circle of artists, “Euterpists,” with whom Sibelius began socializing in 1902, assumed he composed speedily and miraculously; but his wife and intimate friends knew how difficult it could be to get him to complete anything on time, owing to his moods and his Bacchic revels. Sibelius’s own delays and the inability of Nováček to master the solo part in time resulted in
several postponements of the Concerto’s premiere. When the performance finally took place on February 8, 1904, with Sibelius conducting, the critics were divided about the merits of the piece itself but united in the opinion that Nováček was ill-equipped to handle its difficulties.

Sibelius found much that he wanted to revise and, despite Burmester’s offer to “launch” the Concerto with several performances in Helsinki in October 1904, Sibelius was unwilling to take on such a deadline. His revision was completed by the end of June 1905, but arrangements were made for another violinist—Karl Halir, also not up to Burmester’s caliber—to premiere the revised version in Berlin with no less than Richard Strauss conducting. Again reviews were mixed—Joseph Joachim, who had been Brahms’s advisor on violin matters, not surprisingly weighed in with the detractors. Wounded at being passed over again, Burmester kept to his threat never to play the Concerto, though Sibelius did send him a score when it finally appeared in print. It was not until the 1930s that it caught on with the public. The dedication, incidentally, went to a seventeen-year-old violinist Ferenc von Vecsey, who played the work in Berlin and Vienna in 1910.

Sibelius scholar Erik Tawaststjerna suggests that much of the Romantic nostalgia in the Concerto reflects the composer’s unfulfilled dreams of being a violin virtuoso. The poetic opening unfolds slowly in the dark-hued colors that people have come to equate with Finland even without any quotations or programmatic legends. The looseness of the sonata form reflects the concerto types of Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Bruch rather than the forms of Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms. A cadenza for the soloist, for example, serves as the development section. The ascendancy of the soloist throughout the work reflects Sibelius’s idea of what a concerto should be, a view he kept to the end of his life.

The slow movement is a kind of romanza (in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a slow lyrical instrumental piece) in B-flat major; the long violin cantilena (singing melody) begins in that key after a series of wind passages in thirds has made some tonal excursions. The contrasting middle section or secondary theme, depending on one’s structural perspective, is based on the woodwind opening, now in the violins. When the orchestra returns to the “cantilena” theme, the solo violin provides interesting counterpoint with jagged leaps and acrobatic broken octaves.

The finale presents the rhythm of a polonaise (festive dance of Polish origins), with the solo violin in its hefty lower register, possibly prompting the witty remark of scholar and composer Donald Francis Tovey about “a polonaise for polar bears.” The remark might also pertain to the second theme, notable for its playful cross accents. The movement is replete with violin pyrotechnics, which explode soon after the first theme’s presentation. Approaching a kind of rondo form (in which a refrain alternates with contrasting episodes), the finale was characterized by Sibelius as a “danse macabre,” which includes lighter moments alongside the dark as a proper “dance of death” should.

—©Jane Vial Jaffe

*Scored for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, and strings*
Variations on an Original Theme, op. 36, “Enigma”
Edward Elgar

Born in Broadheath, near Worcester, June 2, 1857; died in Worcester, February 23, 1934

On October 24, 1898, Elgar wrote to his publisher and dear friend August Johannes Jaeger:

Since I’ve been back [from a visit to London] I have sketched a set of Variations (orkestry) on an original theme: the Variations have amused me because I’ve labelled ‘em with the nicknames of my particular friends—you are Nimrod. That is to say I’ve written the variations each one to represent the mood of the “party”—I’ve liked to imagine the “party” writing the var: him (or her) self & have written what I think they wd. have written—if they were asses enough to compose—it’s a quaint idee & the result is amusing to those behind the scenes & won’t affect the hearer who “nose nuffin.” What think you?

The work became known as the Enigma Variations, not in regard to the identity of the musical portraits but owing to something deeper, which the composer mentioned in a program note for the first performance:

The Enigma I will not explain—its “dark saying” must be left unguessed, and I warn you that the apparent connection between the Variations and the Theme is often of the slightest texture; further, through, and over the whole set another and larger theme “goes,” but is not played.

This suggests a two-fold enigma: the “dark saying” and the larger unplayed theme. Most musical detectives have concentrated on the latter, proposing such solutions as “God Save the King,” “Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay,” the slow movement of Mozart’s Prague Symphony, the note equivalents of B–A–C–H, the phrase “never, never, never” from “Rule Britannia,” and an altered version of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.” The “dark saying” has been seen as a reference to “For now we see through a glass darkly” (Corinthians I). The enigmas may never be solved, but this has only added to the attraction of the work, which shines brightly on its own musical merits.

The first performance took place in London on June 19, 1899, led by the great German conductor Hans Richter. The Enigma Variations catapulted Elgar from a little-known composer of choral pieces to a national treasure on the stature of Purcell, and into the international spotlight.
Although Elgar disguised the identities of his musical portraits by using initials or pseudonyms, the names were revealed long ago, the composer having made no attempt to keep them secret. The following brief description of the Variations refers to the initials printed for each movement on the program page. The quoted comments are the composer’s.

**Theme.** Stated in contrasting G minor and G major sections.

I. C.A.E. is Elgar’s wife. The variation includes Elgar’s special whistle (letting Alice know he was home) in oboe and bassoon.

II. Hew David Steuart-Powell played chamber music with Elgar; his finger warm-ups on the keyboard are mimicked.

III. Richard Baxter Townshend, an amateur actor, portrayed an old man with fluctuating voice: falsetto = upper woodwinds, low bass = bassoons.

IV. William M. Baker, the country squire, “energetic and downright,” would often bang the door when leaving the room.

V. Richard P. Arnold (son of Matthew) is portrayed, “whose serious conversation (C minor, in bass) was continually broken up by whimsical and witty remarks (flute).”

VI. Isabel Fitton’s viola lessons with Elgar are depicted.

VII. The architect who built Elgar’s house, Arthur Troyte Griffith, failed in his “maladroit essays to play the pianoforte.” Elgar’s attempts to make order out of chaos (strong rhythms) end in vain (final despairing “slam”).

VIII. Winifred Norbury’s tranquil eighteenth-century house once sheltered “Troyte” and Elgar in a storm.

IX. One of the most famous and moving of the variations, “Nimrod” nobly portrays Elgar’s friend Jaeger, recalling a conversation between the two concerning Beethoven’s slow movements. *Jaeger* is German for hunter, and Nimrod, Noah’s great grandson, was a mighty hunter.

X. Dory Penny’s nickname was Dorabella (from *Così fan tutte*); her stammer as well as her gracefulness are evoked.

XI. George R. Sinclair’s bulldog Dan rolls down a bank, falls in the river, paddles, scrambles out, and barks.

XII. Basil Nevinson played chamber music with Elgar on the cello.
XIII. Lady Mary Lygon took a voyage to Australia, so Elgar quotes Mendelssohn’s *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*. We can perhaps hear steamship engines in the timpani rolls played with snare drumsticks. Though the variation was inspired by Elgar’s innocent friendship with Lygon and regret over her departure, the music gained an intimacy of its own, losing concrete connection with Lady Lygon. Hence Elgar replaced the initials with asterisks.

XIV. Edu was his wife’s pet name for Elgar himself. The C.A.E. and Nimrod variations are recalled, referring to the most important influences on his life. The work is summed up by a triumphal presentation of the theme in the major.

—© Jane Vial Jaffe

*Scored for 2 flutes, 2nd doubling piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, triangle, cymbals, bass drum, organ, strings*